PolicyLink Equity Summit 2018: Our Power. Our Future. Our Nation
Grant Report

Due: No later than 05/15/2018

This report is an opportunity to reflect on your delegation experience. Please answer the questions below in no more than two pages. *If you have any questions, please reach out to Dennis Yee at* dennis@policylink.org.

Name of delegation: National Coalition of South Asian Organizations (NCSO)

Contact: Sonia Kotecha sonia@saalt.org (301) 270-1855

1. List all members of your delegation and their organizations in the format below:

	Last name	First Name	Org
1	*Sridaran*	*Lakshmi*	*SAALT*
2	*Stephanie*	*Gilmore*	*AshaKiran*
3	*Dhara*	*Puvar*	*SAAPRI*
4	*Anil*	*Methipara*	*SAAPRI*
5	*Chirayu*	*Patel*	*Young Leader*
6	*Kiran*	*Mishra*	*Young Leader*

2. Describe your experience as a delegation at Equity Summit 2018. What did you learn? How will you apply this to your work?

3. Did you build any new relationships/partnerships or become aware of networks relevant to your work? Please describe.

4. Are there topics discussed at Equity Summit 2018 you would like to know more about?

Describe your experience at the summit. What did you learn? How will you apply this to your work?

The Equity Summit was inspirational with moving and deeply real sharing of stories and experiences. It helped me have a stronger commitment to the equity movement. I learned how organizations are tackling issues from an equity perspective that are outside of the work of my organization. These include how organizations use an explicit racial equity lens to understand and address issues in housing, mental health and substance abuse, and male mentorship.

By being present for the various panel sessions and keynote addresses during the summit, my mind was opened up to the full range of equity and social justice issues that community members face and that organizations are working on. This increased understanding of our communities' place in the current political landscape and big picture issues will certainly inform SAAPRI's work moving forward. We seek the knowledge and experience of experts on how they engage in policy work, research, and outreach in Chicago and other cities, and we are always looking for ways to build bridges between the South Asian community and groups such as those represented at the summit. For example, I attended a session called "Debugging Bias in Big Data." As SAAPRI is primarily a research institute, we gained valuable insight on how to ensure that the technology and databases that we use can yield the most objective predictions, and what platforms keep our community's data safe. We were also able to think about how we might collaborate with new groups to make this information more accessible.

I got a better understanding of 'equity' and what it means for different constituencies represented at the summit. It means representation, inclusion, and accountability for everyone involved so we can better address the disparities that we see in policy outcomes and representation in the work I am involved. For me, it means better identifying stakeholders in the work I am involved in and getting them involved in the work to get outcomes desired.

I had an AMAZING experience at the summit, learning so much about movement-building and social justice over the course of the three days of the summit. I came away with many inspiring takeaways, like to never cross a picket line, that extraordinary art is specific, the fact that our politics need to extend to the people we don't like, the reality that laws are not neutral: someone has to make them and someone has to maintain them, and the realization that police shooting black people is a hate crime. However, I also came away with a wealth of concrete knowledge, skills, and information I will be able to apply to my movement work in the days and years to come. I intend to use the skills, frameworks, and strategies I gained from the conference to inform my policy work, my activism, and my movement journalism as well as utilizing the connections and networks I gained through the conference to support and inform all my work.

I appreciated the many reminders that the conversation is about *equity*, not equality – equality implies sameness, equity asserts difference; can have different perspectives and be of equal value and worth to society and to our communities, organizations, workplaces. It was very useful to have workshop organizers deconstruct the trope of a "good" immigrant (worthy of citizenship) and a "bad" immigrant (criminal, deserving of deportation). Invoked for me the 8-prong model of human rights. Explored that gender and citizenship increase vulnerability to violence in the US; also queer/trans identity are also incredibly vulnerable. When we create a movement that centers their experiences as meaningful and the site for creating change, we will find a stronger movement for all women/womyn.

Did you build any new relationships/partnerships or become aware of networks relevant to your work? Please describe.

I got to personally meet other organizations in the National Coalition of South Asian Organizations and hear about the work they are doing. Our organization was already a part of this coalition but it was the first time I had personal contact with other South Asian organizations outside of Chicago.

It was especially valuable to connect with individuals in our NCSO delegation to meet the people working with and for South Asians in other parts of the country, and members of the Chicago delegation to have a picture of which organizations were prioritizing equity issues in our city.

I primarily attended sessions and workshops that dealt with immigration or economic equity. Specifically, I connected with two of the panelists from Center for Popular Democracy that specifically emphasized more transparency and decisions made by the Federal Reserve (monetary policy) regarding their decisions on federal funds rate and holding it down for longer to see how it affects unemployment. As it could mean millions of jobs for workers with low or limited skills.

Connecting and re-connecting with members of the NCSO as a part of the SAALT delegation was an immensely valuable experience! Not only was I able to meet people doing incredible South Asian American civic work whose work I was able to connect by peers and networks with (several of the people I met through the SAALT PolicyLink delegation will be speaking on a panel I am coordinating next week), but I was also able to meet people doing work and research I was able to get involved after the conference (I am contributing to the South Asian American civic research work of someone who I met at the conference next week).

It was great to meet other members of the National Coalition of South Asian Organizations over lunch and learn about their work in different parts of the country, which also included SAALT's founder and a closing plenary panelist, Deepa Iyer. I also met with Muslim activist and cofounder of Women's March, Linda Sarsour; chatted for 30 minutes or so about each other's lives, ongoing work, domestic violence and sexual assault, the #MeToo movement

Are there topics discussed at the summit you would like to know more about?

The topic of trauma-informed programming and advocacy came up a lot. I would like to know more about developing a trauma-informed approach.

I would like to know more about how organizations and people in different sectors (private, public, non-profit) can best collaborate on projects that result in more equitable research practices and policy. I would like to see models or examples of what has been successful in the past.

I think I would like to see more engagement with organizations that are using novel ways to build economic equity and wealth for low income and people of color. Specifically what kinds of organizing, advocacy, and political/issue based campaigns that lead to establishment of equitable financial policies both through Congress and Executive administrative powers.

I was truly amazed by the abundance of information presented at the summit and I was provided with more information than I have even now fully had a chance to process, especially in the field of prison industrial complex abolition! My only wish was that I could have attended even more workshops, some of which occurred at the same time as the workshops I did choose to attend, perhaps the sessions were recorded or the resources from these talks could be made available?